

THE ECHO OF THE LAKE

AND OTHER POEMS

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Edward L. Darling

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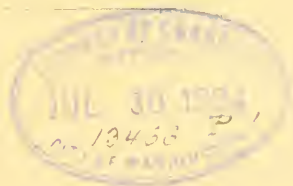
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THE ECHO OF THE LAKE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY
EDWARD I. DARLING



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EDWARD I. DARLING

TROW'S
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY,
NEW YORK.

TO
HON. JOHN T. MORGAN,
OF ALABAMA,
UNITED STATES SENATOR,

AS A TOKEN OF FRIENDSHIP AND ESTEEM, THESE CRUDE
EFFORTS ARE DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

IT is not my desire, in publishing these productions, to seek recognition as a poet, but to portray, to the best of my ability, for the perusal of a few personal friends, some of the sentiments and emotions that have agitated the mind of one in whom they have kindly expressed interest. I lay no claim to startling originality, but have endeavored to avoid being stilted or prosaic. I publish my verses, such as they are, trusting, through the indulgence of my friends and the indifference of the public, they may be accepted as they are intended.

THE AUTHOR.

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THE ECHO OF THE LAKE.

A PHANTASM.

PART FIRST.



INTRODUCTION.

ACCORDING to the laws of the Water-sprites, if one of their number is looked upon by a mortal, they must endeavor to lure him upon the waters of their mystic lake after nightfall. This once accomplished he is in their power. His mortal body will perish and his soul be held in bondage for a hundred years, at the expiration of which time he becomes a water-sprite or gnome, whichever he may desire. Richard is deeply in love with a maiden living upon the opposite shore of the lake, who does not return his affection. While walking, one evening, by the side of the lake, bewailing his sad lot, he discovers Rosamond sporting in the crystal waters. She accosts him, and by promising to aid him in securing the love of the maiden, induces him to come to the lake the next evening, stand beneath a willow tree, make the call of the whip-poor-will; if it is answered he is to embark in a canoe that will be in readiness, and hasten to the maid, who will be waiting, with open arms, to receive him on the other shore. Richard does as she directs; his call is answered; he embarks in the canoe and boldly starts across the lake. When in the middle his canoe is stopped, and he finds he has been deceived by Rosamond, who appears, and condemns his soul to hover as an echo over the lake for a hundred years.

N. B. This story was conceived by the author upon his visiting the Echo Lake, at the White Mountains, N. H.

CHARACTERS.

ROSAMOND..... Queen of the Water-sprites.

RICHARD..... A Young Hunter.

ZENAS..... King of the Gnomes.

Gnomes, Fairies, Water-sprites, Imprisoned Souls, etc.

THE ECHO OF THE LAKE.

A PHANTASM. PART I.

SCENE.—*Banks of Echo Lake at nightfall. Gnomes and Fairies revelling in the moonlight.*

Chorus of Fairies and Gnomes.

Gnomes and Fairies far and near,
Quickly, quickly, gather here.
By the lake so cool and clear
We may revel without fear ;
Should a mortal dare appear,
And our blithesome revel hear,
We will laugh, and hoot, and jeer,
As we quickly disappear.

ZENAS.

Sprites of water now appear,
Join us in our evening revel.

Chorus of Water-sprites (rising from the lake).

As the evening shadows deepen,
And the shades of night are falling,
From our beds of water-lilies
We will hasten to your calling ;
While the breezes, gently sighing,
Waft a murmur thro' the forest,
And the moon is softly weaving
Silv'ry chains o'er lake and woodland,
From the gently-heaving bosom
Of our mystic lake we hasten.

ZENAS (to ROSAMOND).

Welcome, fair sister, your coming gives us joy ;
Without your regal presence our revel had been
wanting.
With merry song and dance we'll pass the fleet-
ing hours,
'Till midnight's mystic veil is o'er fair nature
thrown.

Chorus of Gnomes, Fairies, and Sprites.

With merry song and dance we'll pass the fleet-
ing hours,
'Till midnight's mystic veil is o'er fair nature
thrown.

ROSAMOND.

Most gracious king, I thank you for your cordial greeting ;
But pray you listen while I do relate
What I from cool recesses of my mystic lake
have seen.

At ev'ning when the sun has gone to rest,
And mellow twilight's o'er the landscape
falling,
And when the nightingale's melodious song
Is mingled with the whip-poor-will's sad
calling,
Then mortals think of sleep, and sprites awake
To revel in the waters of their lake.

Last ev'ning, just about this hour methinks,
When all the sprites my signal but awaited
To sally forth, upon the banks I saw
A sight that to our revel was ill-fated.
For, 'neath yon willow tree, with sadd'ned air,
There stood a youth, of beauty wond'rous
fair.

Chorus of Gnomes, Fairies, and Sprites.

A mortal ! a mortal !
Upon our queen has cast his eyes.
Ha ! ha ! ha ! Ho ! ho ! ho !

Ecstatic joy, a glad surprise !
For now another mortal dies,
Another mortal dies !

ZENAS.

And pray what did he here ?
This spot by mortal foot should ne'er be trod.

ROSAMOND.

He seemed absorbed in deepest meditation ;
His manner was dejected, and care-worn looked
his eye.
Methinks that some fair maid has trifled with
his heart,
For mortals, I suppose, as well as we, know
how to love ;
And yet that cannot be, for if 'twere so,
What more could maiden wish to love than
such as he ?

ZENAS.

According to our laws
This mortal now must die.

Chorus of Gnomes, Fairies, and Sprites.

Ha ! ha ! ho ! ho ! a mortal, a mortal
Upon our queen has cast his eyes ;
And now according to our laws
This mortal dies, this mortal dies !

ROSAMOND.

I think he will be here again,
For while he gazed in mute surprise
I waved my hand to him and smiled,
Then vanished from before his eyes.

ZENAS.

'Tis well ! But hark, I hear his footsteps now
Approaching slowly to our mystic dell.

ROSAMOND.

Then Fairies, Sprites, and Gnomes away,
And I will meet him 'neath the tree,
And in my sweetest tones will offer aid
To win the coy'affections of the maid.
If he do but accept, then shout with glee,
For that will surely bring his soul to me.

Chorus of Gnomes, Fairies, and Sprites.

When the mortal doth appear,
And his promise greets our ear,
With a laugh and hoot and jeer
We will quickly then appear.

(*Enter* RICHARD.)

RICHARD.

Sadly I wander,
Deeply I ponder,

Seeking in vain
Solace to find.
No ray of sunlight penetrates
The darkness of my soul.
The day seems night,
And night a ghastly pall
Which, lifted with the dawn,
Presents to view the shrivelled corpse of Hope,
And stands by with virulent leer
The hideous spectre Memory.

ROSAMOND.

Why speak you thus, fair youth ?
Such words from one so young
Sound strange, and out of keeping.

RICHARD.

And pray, sweet maiden, who art thou
That question, and thus criticise my words ?

ROSAMOND.

One who would give thee solace
That you seek,
And render more substantial aid, perchance,
If it be in her power.

RICHARD.

And still my question is unanswered ;
Who art thou, fair maid,
That offer solace and substantial aid
To one who knows you not ?

ROSAMOND.

I am the Queen of Water-sprites,
And having seen your sore distress,
Would aid you by my magic pow'r
To gain your love and be at rest.

*Chorus of Imprisoned Souls (heard from the
depths of the lake).*

Heed her not, heed her not !
She is false, false tho' fair !
Heed her not, heed her not,
Heed her not, mortal beware !

RICHARD.

Still, I confess I cannot see
Why you unasked should offer aid.

ROSAMOND.

By offering aid to you, fair youth,
Know that I also aid myself,

That is, provided you accept,
For by our laws who'er shall give
A mortal succor in distress
Regains their own imprisoned soul,
And freedom from the bonds we loathe ;
Therefore both gain and nothing lose.

Chorus of Imprisoned Souls.

Heed her not, heed her not !
She is false, false tho' fair !
Heed her not, heed her not,
Heed her not, mortal beware !

RICHARD.

It seems so strange I hesitate
And yet such aid 'twere foolish to refuse ;
For if I understand aright
Both win our hearts' desire and nothing lose.

ROSAMOND.

Both win our hearts' desire if you accept.
You win your love and I my soul ;
For by my life I swear to you
That you, shall in your arms enfold
Your love before this hour to-morrow night
If you but follow my instructions right.

Chorus of Imprisoned Souls.

Heed her not, heed her not !
She is false, false tho' fair !
Heed her not, heed her not,
Heed her not, mortal beware !

RICHARD.

And pray what would you have of me ?

ROSAMOND.

Swear by your love that you'll obey
All my instructions faithfully,
Preserving utmost secrecy.

RICHARD.

I fain would know what your instructions are
Before I swear by that to me so dear.

ROSAMOND.

Your task will be most easy, gallant youth :
Come to this dell to-morrow night,
And stand beneath yon willow tree ;
Then make the call of whip-poor-will,
And if an answer come to thee,
Know that my efforts were not vain,
And she whom you now so adore,
Is waiting with impatient sighs
To greet thee on the other shore.

Then haste thee to yon crystal lake,
Where you will find a light canoe ;
And now methinks I've said enough,
For you will know what else to do.
You see it is an easy way
To reach the much-desired goal :
You win the sunlight that you sought,
I win not sunlight—but a soul.

Chorus of Imprisoned Souls.

Heed her not, heed her not !
She is false, false tho' fair !
Heed her not, heed her not,
Heed her not, mortal beware !

RICHARD.

Can this be all of me you ask ?
For by my soul this is no task
To put before such love as mine.
The price seems insufficient that I pay
For such a priceless treasure that I gain.

ROSAMOND.

Yes, that is all I ask.

RICHARD.

Well, then, I swear that by my love,

Your mandate strictly I'll obey,
Preserving utmost secrecy.

Chorus of Gnomes, Fairies, and Sprites.

Ha! ha! the mortal, the mortal
Who on our queen did cast his eyes
Has promised to obey her laws;
And now this mortal surely dies.

ROSAMOND.

Now quickly leave this mystic dell,
But do not fail to-morrow night
To follow my instructions right,
And all will yet be well. [*Exit* RICHARD.]

(Enter Gnomes, etc.)

Chorus of Gnomes, Fairies, and Sprites.

See the mortal disappear;
Yet we need not have a fear,
For to-morrow's very near,
And to-morrow he'll be here.
Let us laugh, and hoot, and jeer,
For to-morrow he'll be here.

END OF PART I.

THE ECHO OF THE LAKE.

A PHANTASM.

PART SECOND.

THE ECHO OF THE LAKE.

A PHANTASM. PART II.

SCENE. — *Bank of Echo Lake at nightfall. Enter*
RICHARD.

RICHARD.

The shadows of departing day
Are 'round me gently falling,
As mellow twilight lights the way
And love to me is calling.

Chorus of Imprisoned Souls.

Foolish mortal, heed our warning,
Let its echo reach your heart :
If you heed the sprite's soft speeches,
You and love forever part.

RICHARD.

How sadly sighs the evening breeze ;
It seems to whisper to my heart :
Poor fool, heed not the sprite's fair words,
Or you and love forever part.
'Tis strange that sighing of the breeze
Should waken doubts within my breast,
And ev'ry rustle of the trees .
Should fill my soul with vague unrest.
It is not fear, and yet what can it be ?
There seems around me to enfold
A mantle of repulsive gloom,
Which warns me of approaching doom,
That I would fain eschew.
But what care I for doubts and vague unrest,
When love, I know, awaits to make me blest.
[*Steps beneath the willow-tree.*
Whip-poor-will !

ROSAMOND (*from the other shore*).

Whip-poor-will !

RICHARD.

Oh, joy ! there comes an answer to my call ;
Still, had there not, my patient, loving heart,
Which prisoned for so long within my breast,

Would struggle to break its fetters and be free,
That it might fly across the lake to thee.

[RICHARD *embarks in a canoe that is waiting
for him and starts for the other shore.*

Swiftly o'er the crystal lake
I glide in my light canoe ;
Silv'ry moonbeams softly break
Over ripples in its wake,
And all nature seems to make
Homage to its beaut'ous queen,
Who, in robes of silver sheen,
Smiles benignly on the scene ;
And she knows full well, I ween,
That I haste, my love, to you,
So she kindly lights my way
O'er the rip'ling waters blue,
Making night as bright as day
By the lustre of her ray,
And I grateful homage pay
Both, my love, to her and you.

Ah, heaven ! what can it mean, this sudden
change !

The sky grows dark, and ev'rything seems
strange !

The very ripples, that a moment ago
Were tipped with moonbeams, cease their merry
flow ;

From ripples they have grown to surging waves,
That seethe and foam around my light canoe,
And on each white-capped crest there rides a
 maid,

Determined and relentless, that pursue
My fragile craft. I strive with might and main
To reach the other shore, but all in vain ;
With ev'ry surging wave they nearer come ;
Oh, God ! should they o'ertake me, I'm undone !
But by the pow'rs that reign supreme above,
Naught shall prevent my coming to thee, love.

Chorus of Gnomes, Fairies, and Sprites.

Ha ! ha ! the mortal, the mortal
 Who on our queen did cast his eyes,
Has dared to venture on our lake ;
 And now this mortal surely dies.

RICHARD.

My boat has stopped ; just heav'n, what can it
 mean !

My efforts to proceed are all in vain,
And 'round about me shadowy forms I see
That would impede my progress, and restrain
My coming to thee, love ; but what care I !
I'll breast the waves, and reach thy side or die !

[RICHARD *leaps into the lake.*

Chorus of Imprisoned Souls.

Thou art doomed, thou art doomed,
And thy soul will be entombed
In a cavern dark and drear
Many a long and weary year.

RICHARD.

My rigid limbs will not obey
The mandate of my will,
And stiffened like a corpse I lay
Upon the surface of the lake,
Which now is calm and still ;
No trace of storm is 'round me seen,
The waves, their fury spent,
Lie still, and now the moon's bright sheen
Smiles mockingly upon the scene,
As by some foul fiend sent
To taunt me with its silv'ry light
For being in so sad a plight.

ROSAMOND (*standing in the canoe* RICHARD
has just vacated).

Ha ! ha ! my ardent youth, you see
By following my instructions right
You've found not her you sought—but me ;
Think not you 'tis a pleasant sight ?

RICHARD.

Oh ! false enchantress, by thy speeches mild
I, foolish youth, was tempted and beguiled
To venture after nightfall on your lake,
And brave its danger for my love's sweet sake.
But now I know your speeches were foul lies
To lure a foolish victim, who his eyes
Upon thy fairy form did cast, to death.
By heav'n ! I curse thee with each fleeting
breath.

ROSAMOND (*mockingly*).

My gallant youth, thy curses, or regrets,
It matters not but little which they be,
Are all in vain ; thy soul will be enslaved
A hundred years, and after that be free
To wander wheresoe'er it wilt—
Provided it permission get from me. Ha ! ha !

RICHARD.

Oh, God ! and is it thus I'm doomed to die
A living death for many a weary year ?
Altho' enslaved, my soul will ever try
To break its loathsome bonds, and hover near
Thee, love—ah, could this be I would not sigh
To live, for it were happiness to die.

ROSAMOND.

Fair youth, such love for one who loves you not
Excites my pity to such an extent
That were it in my pow'r I'd set thee free
To hover near her to thy heart's content ;
But by our rigorous laws this cannot be ;
Still, I can try to bring her soul to thee.

RICHARD.

Execrable fiends, and is't not enough
To take the mortal life and soul you hate,
Which I resign without one single pang,
And spare my love from such a cruel fate ?

ROSAMOND.

Most noble youth, I pity your distress,
And some concession from our laws will make,
To doom your soul for the next hundred years
To hover as an echo o'er our lake ;
And when another mortal we allure
Upon its bosom after twilight's fall
To meet his love, your spirit, hov'ring near,
Will make the wished-for answer to his call.
Now bid farewell to mortal life and love,
To earthly sorrow, care, and joy, and pain ;
The soul once yours now's mine, and mine alone ;
The freedom it has lost 'twill ne'er regain.

[RICHARD, *mute and helpless, sinks.*

Chorus of Gnomes, Fairies, and Sprites.

Ha ! ha ! the mortal, the mortal,
 Upon our queen did cast his eyes,
And now according to our laws
 We watch him as he slowly dies.
His spirit we've no doubt will make
An excellent echo for our lake.
With laugh and shout and hoot and jeer
We watch him slowly disappear.

THE END.

ODDS AND ENDS.

ODDS AND ENDS.

TO K——.

A LOVELY face, a form of grace,
A tiny foot, a hand so white,
A giant mind, chaste and refined,
And beaut'ous eyes so clear and bright.

All this, and more, *you* think you are ;
Your thoughts from no one are concealed ;
Yet, if you sought what *others* thought,
These wholesome truths would be revealed.

A face once fair, now worse for wear,
Complexion—but that no one sees ;
A form so light, that well it might
Be wafted by the faintest breeze.

A weaker mind 'twere hard to find ;
Such spiteful eyes, and tongue so tart ;
Immense conceit, and giant feet,
Comprise of thee the greater part.

ON THE PRESENTATION OF A SONG
COMPOSED BY THE AUTHOR.

ACCEPT, sweet friend, my proffer'd gift,
Altho' its worth indeed be small ;
My only hope in off'ring it
Is that perchance it may recall
One thought of me, and for a while
Serve leisure moments to beguile.

And yet, perhaps to you 'twill seem
An unharmon'ous, worthless thing,
Unworthy of a single thought ;
Tho' bad to play—much worse to sing.
If all intrinsic worth it lack,
Why, then, sweet friend—please send it back.

“MAN’S ESTATE.”

TO-DAY I have reached “Man’s Estate,”
And the years of my childhood are flown,
When I felt just as much of a man,
Tho’ estates then, as now, I had none.

I have reached “Man’s Estate,” and I think,
As around me I gaze, and behold
Men endow’d with both talent and brains,
“Man’s Estate” is a glorious goal.

But if you will pause and reflect
On the numberless asses that call
Themselves men, you’ll agree when I say,
“Man’s Estate” is not much after all.

N. B.—Written on the author’s twenty-first birthday—October 9, 1884.

TO J——.

AH ! tell me, poor sensitive heart of mine,
Why do you flutter when someone is nigh,
And glow as tho' basking in warm sunshine,
When I catch the glad light of a laughing
eye ?

Once, poor heart, you were all my own ;
But now—happy heart, you are her's alone.

What is the song that you sing, oh, my heart ?
Holds it a prophecy, bright as the day,
Of loving souls wedded never to part,
Tho' youth's beauty shall fade, and tresses be
gray ?

Sing, happy heart, a song like this
But preludes a dream o'erflowing with bliss.

Oh ! tell me, thou fluttering heart, what tale
Bring you so gladly to whisper to me ?
That her love is true, and it will not fail,
And life shall a garden of paradise be ?
Ah ! happy heart, I have won a throne
In her loving heart, where I reign alone.

TO A DEVOUT LADY.

SWEET Christian, during the days of fasting,
As you bow th' adoring knee,
And your prayers ascend to heaven,
Let one prayer ascend for me.

As you kneel in supplication
To the "Father, God of love,"
And your shapely hand displaying,
Covered by a dainty glove—
See, the Holy Father pauses
During the solemn Litany,
And his heav'nly eyes with longing
Rest upon thy glove, and thee.

Ah ! thy heav'nly glance, sweet Christian,
Sends thy heart's blood to thy cheek ;
Who'd have looked for thoughts so worldly
In one so devout and meek.

Still thine eyes, with rapt devotion,
Rest upon thy book, and yet
In thy breast a sweet emotion
Makes thee wander, and forget ;
And a longing for confession
To thy " Father, God of love,"
Fills thy heart, and yet, thy choice is
He of earth—not He above.

TO H——.

WITH soap and suds—your stock in trade,
An honest living might be made ;
One should not dress in satin fine,
Or drink the very best of wine,
But by their bent to fight and wrangle,
Make a good living with the mangle.

You who have by the dawn's faint light
Changed grimy shirts from black to white,
Now silk and satin dresses own,
But how you got them is not known.

The form which they adorn, alas !
Is but a quivering, shapeless mass
Of flesh, seed-warts, and sick'ning pimples,
Which you are pleased to term as dimples.

Your flabby hands, your bulbous ears,
Your wat'ry eyes—tho' not with tears ;
Your pond'rous feet bunions adorn,
With here and there a callous corn.

You try in vain, with wig and "scratch,"
To hide your baldness, and to match
The meagre hair that kindly fate
Has left upon your brainless pate.

The dulcet cadence of your voice
Should cause the deaf man to rejoice,
And with a loud and joyful cheer
Thank God, for once, he couldn't hear.

The silks and satins that you wear
Are gotten—well, no matter where;
But all the soap and suds e'er seen
Can never wash your conscience clean.

Enjoy them, if you can, on earth;
The end will cost you all they're worth.
You care not now what's the amount,
You've some poor fool to square th' account;
But did you ever think full well
Who'll square th' account you have in h—?

LINES WRITTEN IN AN AUTOGRAPH
ALBUM.

YOU know not that of me you ask,
Sweet girl, an almost useless task,
For when my "scratching" meets your sight,
You'll wonder what I tried to write ;
And as you ponder o'er the same,
'Twill ne'er occur to you it's a name.

A name, it matters not how small ;
" What's in a name ? " nothing at all.
But if your mem'ry chance to stray
Into the past a little way,
Give but one thought, tho' slight it be,
To him whose thoughts are all of thee.

THE LENTEN SEASON.

FORTY days of prayer and penance,
Forty wails rise on the breeze,
Forty priests in forty pulpits,
Forty sinners on their knees ;
Forty saints have gone to glory,
(Forty dollars served them well,)
Forty more'll their footsteps follow,
Forty thousand go to h—.

TO E——.

AH ! had I never loved but thee,
And made to thee my only vow,
I wonder if my heart would be
As wholly thine as it is now.

For had I not, in wasted years,
Felt other passions stir my breast,
I would not know 'twixt doubts and fears,
How much thy love doth make me blest.

I could not love thee half so well
Had I not loved another less,
So that my heart can surely tell
Friendship from love and tenderness.

My heart, like a poor shipwrecked waif,
Tossed to and fro on Passion's sea,
Now's anchor'd in the haven safe ;
The anchor 's love, the haven 's thee.

LOVE AND HATE.

LOVE AND HATE.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a story that I fain would tell
To you, kind reader, but God only knows
How I'll begin ; I don't, I must confess.
'Tis harder far to write in verse than prose,
But since in verse already I've begun,
Altho' to be a poet I don't pretend,
I'll do my best, and with your kind consent
Continue with my verse unto the end.

My hero is not of the common type,
With flowing locks, pale brow, and piercing
eye,
But, as I said before, I'm not a poet,
And with a poet's ideals should not try
To weave my simple story into rhyme,
Altho' I think you'd doubtless say 'twere
worse
If I in my dilemma should begin
To tell my simple story in blank verse.

PROLOGUE.

I.

As Love came floating down to earth,
On the wings of dewy morn,
He said to himself, "In yonder glade
There liveth a fair and blithesome maid,
Who, by my soul, I am much afraid
Without me will be forlorn.

II.

"How gladly would I cheer her heart
Were she and I not strangers ;
This very day I will try to make
Her acquaintance, for sweet pleasure's sake,
And her vagrant heart a captive take
To guard it from worse dangers."

III.

The wicked little imp called Hate
Chanced to be hovering near ;
The mischief he was bent on playing
With any hearts that he caught straying,
So paused to see if Love was saying
Aught that he would like to hear.

IV.

Love, quite unconscious Hate was nigh,
Continued thus explaining :

“ I’m so glad I made an early start,
As I’ll have to first take Elsa’s heart,
And then see that Elbert does his part
To keep her love from waning.

V.

“ I’ll conquer Elsa’s heart to-day,
Elbert’s I’ll take to-morrow,
Then by my subtle magic power
I’ll lead them to a leafy bower
Where they may pass each fleeting hour
Free from all care and sorrow.”

VI.

Now crafty Hate, on hearing this,
Determined to thwart Love’s plan.
He said to himself, with grave intent :
“ When Love’s with Elsa and can’t prevent
I’ll sow a small seed of Discontent
In Elbert’s heart while I can.

VII.

“ When Love to morrow Elbert seeks,
Borne thence on airy pinions,

He will not think that his plans were known,
And I before him a seed have sown
That will quickly ripen—and when grown
Keep him from my dominions.”

VIII.

Love blithely starts upon his way
To capture sweet Elsa's heart,
While subtle Hate, with devilish smile,
And malignant face lit up by guile,
Stands by and watches him all the while
Thus on his errand depart.

IX.

“ Hurrah ! ” cries Hate, with joyous voice,
As he sees Love disappear,
“ I have found the mischief that I sought,
And before Love Elsa's heart has caught
I'll have Elbert's—and Love will know naught
About my having been near.”

CANTO I.

I.

'Twas near the close of spring, the last of May,
Or thereabouts, I think ; suffice to say
The birds were sweetly singing in the trees,
And 'round the flowers buzzed the honey-bees.

II.

And o'er the mountain-top the morning sun
Crept lazily into the azure skies ;
Another day of joy had just begun,
As slowly Sol unclosed his sleepy eyes.

III.

A quaint old farm-house nestl'd in the glade,
And on its porch the joyous sunbeams played ;
The honey-suckle and the roses fair,
Lent balmy fragrance to the morning air.

IV.

The lowing kine upon the hill-side grazed,
And playful lambs were sporting on the
green ;
Sweet Elsa in the doorway stood, and gazed
With rapt expression on the peaceful scene.

V.

To look upon, she was indeed most fair :
Her soft blue eyes, and wavy auburn hair,
And saucy little nose—her lips so red
Looked as if upon rose-leaves she had fed.

VI.

Her shapely little hands were browned by toil ;
But what of that ? her heart was light and
glad.
The sun could not *its* pure complexion spoil—
Her sylph-like form would drive St. Anthony
mad.

VII.

She was her father's joy, his only child,
And like the ivy, clinging strong and wild
'Till of the giant oak it forms a part,
So twined her love about her father's heart.

VIII.

He was a sturdy farmer, Joel by name,
Who for a score of years had tilled the soil ;
His father had before him done the same,
And reaped a goodly harvest by his toil.

IX.

Now Joel, who had reaped the burnish'd grain
To good advantage and financial gain,
Would sometimes say, "You need not be afraid
To wed; thou'lt have a dower, my little maid."

X.

And Elsa, with a sweet, contented smile,
Would nestle closer to her father's side,
And say, "Now, father dear, you know that I'll
Not leave the farm and you to be a bride."

XI.

"I'd rather stay and be your 'little maid,'
And live secluded in our peaceful glade,
Helping about the farm, where'er I can,
Than be the worship'd bride of any man."

XII.

"I know my 'little maid' feels that way now,"
Said Joel; "but e'er long there'll come a day
When some gay lad will come with smile and
bow,
And take your heart, and you, my lass, away."

XIII.

Thus Elsa and her father often spoke ;
She, clinging like the ivy to the oak
To his affections, thought of nothing more ;
But he knew well what love, once planted, bore.

XIV.

The bitter and the sweet, the joy, the pain,
The tender smiles—tho' oft'ner bitter tears—
Which, flowing from the heart, like summer's
rain,
Keeps green the mem'ry of the by-gone years.

XV.

He fain would keep sweet Elsa's heart his own,
Altho' if Love should ask, he was not prone
To show the pain it caused him to consent,
But try as best he could to be content.

XVI.

He was her only counsellor and guide,
Her mother having died when she was born ;
To do his best in ev'ry way he'd tried,
That naught might cause his " little maid "
to mourn.

XVII.

Upon this morning, near the close of May,
As Elsa stood and watched the sunbeams
play
Upon the porch, she gave a sudden start,
For one bright sunbeam seemed to reach her
heart.

XVIII.

She felt it throb a moment, and then rest,
Then throb again, as tho' it tried to seek
A means of egress from her heaving breast ;
And then—a burning blush suffused her cheek.

XIX.

She blushed—altho' she ne'er would have confessed
The thoughts that then usurped her maiden
breast,
And caused the humid tear to dim her eye,
And throbbing heart to breathe a longing
sigh.

XX.

In vain she tried the longing to subdue,
In vain to make the throbbing heart lie still ;
She raised her eyes—a vision met her view,
Young Elbert coming slowly down the hill.

XXI.

He was a careless, bright, good-natured youth,
Frank, honest, open-handed, and, forsooth,
His hearty laugh and merry twink'ling eyes
Showed plainly that for Love he'd had no
sighs.

XXII.

He was a farmer lad, but what of that ?
A farmer lad may have a courtier's heart ;
Tho' dressed in home-spun blouse and broad-
brimmed hat,
I much prefer the farmer for my part.

XXIII.

Alluring Love, thy work thou hast done well,
And Elsa's heart's held captive by thy spell ;
And Elbert, tho' not guided by thy pow'r,
Approaches at the most propitious hour.

XXIV.

We left young Elbert coming down the hill,
And Elsa watching him—her cheeks flush'd
red ;
I said he was not guided by Love's will,
But did not say that Hate his footsteps led.

XXV.

Such was, howe'er, the case, tho' strange it
seem ;

It was a part of Hate's malicious scheme
To let Love triumph until he was prone
To reap his harvest from the seed he'd sown.

XXVI.

And so he guided Elbert's willing feet
Unto the very spot where Love would fain
Have had him come, and coming Elsa meet ;
Once met—Hate knew that he'd seek her
again.

XXVII.

Hate trusted that the tiny seed he'd sown
Would be by Love unnoticed and unknown,
And that young Elbert's heart at first would
prove
A willing captive to the bonds of Love.

XXVIII.

This once accomplished, it was his intent
To nurture carefully the tiny seed
Within his garden planted, then he meant
To cast aside Love, like a worthless weed.

XXIX.

Young Elbert reached the porch, and there he
 paused,
In Elsa's look a dormant something caused
The blood to rush into his sunburned cheek,
And made his heart and limbs alike feel weak.

XXX.

The sunbeam that had gladden'd Elsa's heart,
 Had found a means of egress thro' her eyes ;
And now young Elbert, too, it caused to start,
 And open wide *his* eyes in glad surprise.

XXXI.

He stopped a moment—as if he would say
Good-morning to the lass—then went his way,
Along the little brook that romp'd and played,
Down from the hill-top thro' the quiet glade.

XXXII.

And Elsa stood and watched him till he passed
 From sight, and then a longing fraught with
 pain
Swept o'er her heart, like winter's chilling blast
 Across a desolate and barren plain.

XXXIII.

She wondered would she e'er see him again,
Then wished that she had asked him to remain
And rest himself, or look about the farm—
She had no thought of prudishness or harm.

XXXIV.

She knew her father would not be well pleased,
That she had let a stranger thro' the glade
Without inviting him to have appeased
His thirst, or rest beneath the porch's cool
shade.

XXXV.

But now that he had gone, it was too late
For vain regrets, tho' she resolved if fate
Should lead him by their quiet home again,
Her father should have no cause to complain.

XXXVI.

And Elbert, wand'ring idly through the glade,
Was building ideal castles in the air,
And on each castle's porch there stood a maid,
With eyes of azure blue and auburn hair.

XXXVII.

And thus they met, tho' neither had a thought
That Love and Hate had them together brought,
Simply for their amusement, or that they
Would live to curse with bitterness the day.

XXXVIII.

Had they met but this once, all had been well,
And you, like they, kind reader, spared much
pain,
As I'd have had no story then to tell.
Alas for both ! they often met again.

CANTO II.

I.

The spring had flown, and summer in its stead
Now reigned supreme, and Sol, with ardor
 spread,
His arms, to clasp Earth to his burning breast,
And keep her there, in spite of her unrest.

II.

I judged of her affection by the way
 That she responded to his warm caress ;
I much prefer the months of June or May,
 To August or July, I must confess.

III.

The lambs upon the green no longer played,
But sought the spreading trees' congenial
 shade;
The lowing kine stood knee-deep in the brook,
Or grazed contented in some shady nook.

IV.

The fields were teeming with the golden grain,
And stalwart farmers, heedless of the sun,
With scythes and sickles reaped it, e'er the
rain
Should lay it low—the harvest had begun.

V.

Elsa and Elbert, who, as I have said,
Met in the spring, were now betrothed to wed
At close of harvest time, and Love's delight
Was great, to think his plans were working right.

VI.

And Hate, too, was content to watch the growth
Of Discontent planted in Elbert's breast
At close of spring, and to himself did quoth,
“'Tis time to reap my harvest with the rest.”

VII.

“And yet, perhaps, 'twere best to let them
wed,
And from the breast of Love awhile be fed
Before I reap my harvest—there's no haste ;
The seed I've planted will not run to waste.

VIII.

“ My triumph over Love will be complete
When he finds that the hearts he thought
were free,
And brought together in his blind conceit,
Were not so, but that *one* belonged to me.”

IX.

The harvest now was o'er, the golden grain
Was reaped and stored, secure from wind and
rain ;
And at the quiet farm-house in the glade,
There lived no longer Joel's little maid.

X.

The lad, as Joel feared, with smile and bow
Had come and lured his birdling from the
nest.
The farm-house seemed deserted to him now ;
A leaden heart was prisoned in his breast.

XI.

Young Elbert bought a farm upon the hill,
Whose acres well its granaries did fill ;
And there he took sweet Elsa, who would fain
Have had him at her father's farm remain.

XII.

But Elbert, tho' 'twas cruel to refuse
Her first request, said in a chilling tone,
“ Your father you can visit when you choose,
I'd rather *live* upon a farm I own.”

XIII.

And Elsa's gentle eyes with tears were wet
At his reply, which seemed so cold, and yet—
Her husband she had promised to obey ;
His slightest wish she never would gainsay.

XIV.

So to *his* home they went, altho' her heart
Was somewhat sad, and heavy in her breast,
To think that from her father she must part ;
And still she thought her husband's way the
best.

XV.

• The tiny seed that subtle Hate had sown
Made Elbert answer in so cold a tone ;
And made him jealous of the smallest part
Of filial love that linger'd in her heart.

XVI.

The autumn came, and with the changing leaves
Young Elbert's heart, too, changes, and he
 heaves
Many a sigh to think—he knew not why—
His heart should change, and love wither and
 die.

XVII.

The love so hot and passionate at first
 Was cooling, tho' he fain would keep the
 flame
Alive, and from sweet Elsa keep the worst,
 For she, poor innocent, was not to blame.

XVIII.

She felt the change, and, like a tender rose
 Plucked from its hot-house bed, and roughly
 cast
Into a drift of snow, was left exposed
 To perish in the winter's chilling blast.

XIX.

Morose, and discontented with his lot
Young Elbert grew, and Elsa vainly sought,
With all the charms and graces she possessed,
To keep his love alive within his breast.

XX.

It was a useless task, for subtle Hate
Had planted deep his seed, and in a state
Of exultation watched it while it grew,
And now a harvest rich would reap, he knew.

XXI.

In spring they met and loved ; in summer wed ;
In autumn one's love rip'ned, one's love
waned ;
And now, from both all happiness had fled :
His love was dead, her love, alas !—remained.

XXII.

A few months more, and winter's chilling blast
Swept over hill and dale, and whistling past
Young Elbert, chilled the heart that once was
kind,
And made his sighs seem echoes of the wind.

XXIII.

The seed of Discontent which subtle Hate
Had planted in his heart had ripen'd fast ;
And now to reap he need no longer wait :
The seed of Love was killed—by winter's
blast.

XXIV.

The seed of Love in Elsa's heart, tho' chilled
By Elbert's sighs and coldness, was not killed ;
And needed but Love's warming sun and rain
Of tears to restore it, and bloom again.

XXV.

Love's warming sun for her would never shine,
The fountain of her tears was long since dry,
And like the rose, once nipped by winter's wind,
She, without sun and rain, would droop and
die.

XXVI.

Young Elbert, ere the year, had sold his farm,
His home and Elsa both had lost their charm.
"I long to see the world," he told his wife,
"While you prefer your father's mode of life.

XXVII.

"To stay with him, when first we wed, you tried,
Altho' I fain would bring you to my home ;
Now go to him for whom you've yearned and
sighed,
And I about the world awhile will roam."

XXVIII.

Sweet, patient, loving Elsa thus replied :
“ You know, dear Elbert, I'll not leave your side.
If you but bid me stay, where'er you go
Thy lot is mine—be it for weal or woe.”

XXIX.

But Elbert did not wish it thus to be ;
 He cared not how much sorrow—how much
 pain
He caused her, so he said, “ I can't take thee,
 And with thy father wish thee to remain.”

XXX.

And thus 'twas settled—he should go alone,
 And Elsa seek her father's home again,
Altho' he promised, trying to atone,
 That he'd return before the year should wane.

XXXI.

And Elsa, broken-hearted and forlorn,
Returned unto the house where she was born ;
How sadly changed the blithesome little maid
That left the quaint old farm-house in the glade.

XXXII.

Enshrined within her heart, the flames of love,
Like vestal fires, were burning night and day.
She prayed to Him who reigned supreme above
To bring her Elbert back to her for aye.

XXXIII.

'Twas near the close of spring—the last of May—
Six months had passed, and Elbert still away ;
The birds had sung good-night, and sought their
 nests,
And from his toil the honey-bee, too, rests.

XXXIV.

And in the distant west the evening sun
Was slowly sinking to its calm repose ;
Another day its dreary course had run,
And now was slowly drawing to its close.

XXXV.

Each day for six long months of poignant pain
Sweet Elsa had for Elbert watched in vain,
Tho' to her aching heart Despair oft said,
“ He'll ne'er return to thee, for Love is dead.”

XXXVI.

And still she watched and waited, feeding Hope
With Love's sweet morsels — Hope needs
much besides,
Or with Despair she is not fit to cope—
Until, like Elbert's love—Hope also died.

XXXVII.

Without her husband's love, and Hope, too, dead,
For what had she to live?—life's joy had fled;
Her day of love began with morning's sun,
And ended ere the twilight's shades begun.

XXXVIII.

'Twas just a year since Love and subtle Hate
Had brought two hearts together, and then led
Them both thro' Sorrow's vale to cruel Fate,
And now—Love, Hope, and Elsa, all were
dead.

XXXIX.

The quaint old farm-house, nestling in the glade,
Seemed lone and drear without the "little
maid;"
The ample porch, tho' decked with roses fair,
Was not the same—one rose was plucked from
there.

XL.

And Joel, who, but a twelve months ago,
Had bound, with gladsome heart, the bur-
nished sheaf,
His stalwart form now bent—his hair like snow,
Was aged and broken by his bitter grief.

XLI.

Young Elbert, guided by the power of Hate,
Returned unto the glade, when 'twas too late
To find sweet Elsa—but where'er he went
He found not what he sought—but Discontent.

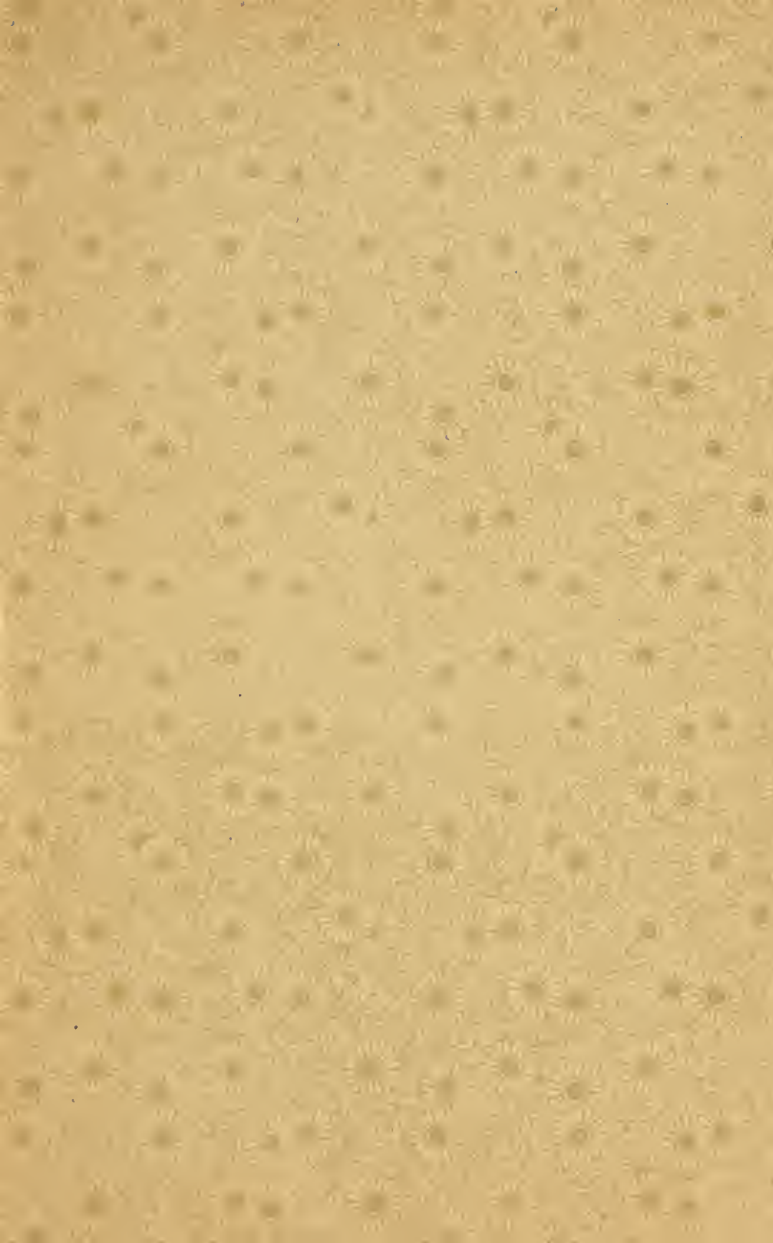
XLII.

The seed of Discontent within his breast,
Which subtle Hate had planted, grew and
throve,
And ever filled him with a vague unrest ;
And thus it was Hate triumphed over Love.

THE END.

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